(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Edward E. Redditt

Redditt Muses About Removal From 'Security'

"As I look back now, it didn't bother me then. It bothered me later. I was so busy I didn't think about it. It bothers me now."

Former Memphis Police Department Sgt. Edward E. Redditt was reminiscing yesterday about his removal from a security detail for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. only hours before King's assassination at the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968.

Former Police and Fire Director Frank C. Holloman ordered Redditt off of the detail after reports there was a "contract" out on the detective's life.

Redditt protested the removal, but said he has no reason to question Holloman's motives.

"I was trained not to be afraid of death. I didn't want to jeopardize my family." Redditt remained off duty for three days, his home and family guarded around-the-clock by detectives.

Redditt, then assigned to the police department's intelligence unit, and Lt. E. H. Arkin Jr. were sitting in a police cruiser in front of Redditt's home when word of the assassination came over the police radio at 6:01 p.m., he said.

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"I was guarded," he said. "Detectives Emmitt Winters and Melvin Burgess were stationed inside the house."

Redditt's partner on the security detail, Patrolman Willie B. Richmond, remained on the detail. "We left him there. I don't know what transpired after that."

In addition to himself and Richmond, there were four police "task teams" of three cars each stationed around the hotel, Redditt said.

Redditt has previously been reluctant to discuss his removal from the security detail and said yesterday, "I still am.

"I told everybody to go look at 'An American Death,' the book (by Gerold Frank). I don't know how he got my log, but it's all there, dates, times; almost, just about, everything I said or did."

Redditt subsequently was transferred to police community relations duty and later served as a field representative for former Rep. Dan Kuykendall (R-Tenn.). He is now deputy director for priority areas in the city's Community Development office.

Holloman could not be reached for comment last night.

Meanwhile, Dep. Fire Chief H. K. Dove yesterday said he fails to understand committee interest created in the transfer of two firemen from Fire Station No. 2 at Main and Butler at about the same time Redditt was relieved from the security detail. The station is about a block from the motel.

"We detail men every day. That's nothing unusual. I can't understand why this is such a big deal," Dove said.